21st December 1953]

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" Sir. is it a fact that the Government have prohibited the grant of these concessions to retired but re-employed persons and that, if they had already enjoyed this concession, recoveries have been ordered? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" Sir. I do not think it is correct."

*Department of Publicity and Information.*

* 188 *Q.*—SRI K. ARANGANATHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) why the Government are maintaining a department of Publicity and Information;

(*b*) whether the department is a permanent one; and

(*c*) the expenditure incurred by the Government for maintaining it?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (*a*) The Information and Publicity Department is being maintained, (*a*) to act as a liaison between the Government and the Press, (*b*) to inform the public on the policies and programmes of Government; and (*c*) to assess trends of public opinion as expressed in the newspapers and bring them to the notice of the Government.

" (*b*) Yes. All the posts in the department which were in existence for over five years and the continuance of which was considered necessary have been made permanent. Some of the posts were retrenched on grounds of economy. The number of posts thus retrenched is 23 out of 48 posts.

" (*c*) The annual expenditure on account of this department is now Rs. 1·3 lakhs. Prior to retrenchment the expenditure was Rs. 2·15 lakhs."

SRI K. ARANGANATHAN :—" டைரக்டர் ஸ்தானம் காலி ஏற்பட்ட காலத்திலே அதே இலாகாவில் இருக்கும் ஒருவருக்கு உயர்வை அளிக்காமல், வேறு ஒரு புதிய நபரை ஏன் நியமிக்கவேண்டும்? அப்படிப்பட்ட டைரக்டர் ஸ்தானத்திற்கு வேண்டிய யோக்கியதாம்சங்கள் என்ன? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" No particular qualifications have been prescribed by any rules for this post and only the general suitability of the person is considered. The present Director of the department was acting on a contract basis and when the contract period was over he has been appointed as the permanent Director of this department."

SRI T. GANAPATHY :—" Sir, may I know whether the Government will make available in Tamil the Information Films of the Government of India for exhibition in rural areas? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, I will consider that suggestion."

DR. K. B. MENON :—" Sir, are the pages of the Madras Information open to the public like the All-India Radio? Does not correct understanding of information mean the presentation of both aspects of a question? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Yes, Sir, we are giving both aspects of the case and also whatever appears in the newspapers is brought to our notice. Besides, in informing the public about the Government's policies and programmes there can be no two aspects. The Government do not make any distinction between one press and another. The entire press is taken into consideration and none is shut out."

SRI M. R. RAMACHANDRAN :—" Sir, may I know whether the Government is aware of the fact that there is a feeling among the public that this department is superfluous? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, I do not know the general feeling about it. If the hon. Member feels like that, I am afraid, it is not the correct feeling. As a matter of fact, when considering the amounts spent by other State Governments, we are spending only about a fifth or tenth of what other Governments do. I think this department is absolutely necessary and we are spending the barest possible minimum in this matter."

DR. K. B. MENON :—" Sir, I am sorry my question has not been answered. Are the pages of the Madras Information open to the public like the All-India Radio? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Sir, the question is about the journal, 'The Madras Information'."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" This journal has to serve a particular purpose. It is not as if party politics is to be brought into it. Certain factual information is published in it and it is therefore not possible for others to publish their articles also."

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Sir, I may add that if hon. Members will contribute well-reasoned, useful and instructive arguments which are fit for publication in the magazine I shall try my best to find columns for them."

SRI S. C. C. ANTHONY PILLAI :—" Sir, is it not a fact that Civil Servants are permitted to contribute highly controversial articles to this journal? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir. they are only allowed to give information about certain things. I do not think they have been permitted to write about controversial matters as such. If anything is brought to my notice, I will look into it."